

MEETING SUMMARY | Dinkey Collaborative Full Group

November 21, 2013

Dinkey Landscape Restoration Project, Sierra National Forest

Meeting Synopsis

At its November 21 meeting, the Dinkey Collaborative debriefed the public meetings it held regarding the development of socioeconomic monitoring indicators, and also provided feedback on the draft indicators themselves. This is part of the Collaborative's larger socioeconomic assessment work with the Sierra Institute for Community and Environment. The Landscape Planning Work Group briefed the full group on the importance analyzing the potential cumulative impacts of restoration treatments to Pacific fisher and California Spotted Owl. The Work Group will meet with Forest Service specialists in December to begin developing a process for analyzing cumulative effects. Marking a major milestone, the Collaborative recommended a final ecological monitoring plan to the Forest, completing nearly three years of work. As done each year, members spoke with the US Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution and evaluated the facilitation support services provided by the Center for Collaborative Policy, CSU Sacramento. Members reviewed the recommendations of the Communication Work Group, which included increasing public outreach efforts at existing public gatherings, and renewed individual commitments to communication efforts. Finally, members reviewed a memorandum regarding criteria for prioritizing prescribed fire activities. The Collaborative created a new work group to begin developing a landscape-scale prescribed fire project that would last for the duration of the group's efforts (i.e., until 2020) and provide the Forest with the flexibility it needs to take advantage of highly constrained opportunities to apply fire. The Collaborative will meet again in January 2014.

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This meeting summary paraphrases individual comments and suggestions from Dinkey Collaborative members. Statements do not indicate consensus of the group unless they are preceded by the words, "AGREEMENT:".

All materials are available to members on DataBasin.org, and general information is available on the Dinkey Collaborative website, www.fs.usda.gov/goto/sierra/dinkeycollaborative For questions please contact the facilitator, Mr. Dorian Fougères, at dfougeres@ccp.csus.edu or (916) 531-3835.

Action Items

1. **All Members:** To send any final comments, recommendations, or suggested indicators regarding the Socioeconomic Assessment Report to Stan Van Velsor by the close of business on November 27, 2013.
2. **Mr. Van Velsor:** To initiate a follow-up Socioeconomic Advisory Group meeting with the Sierra Institute.
3. **Communication Work Group:** To reconvene by telephone in December to revise communication materials and develop a proposal for an outreach and education budget.
4. **Forest Staff:** To brief the Collaborative on the current budget request at the full Collaborative meeting on January 16, 2014.
5. **The Facilitator:** To set up a water session call with **Mr. Ashley, Ms. Stacy, Mr. Haze and Mr. Harger** in January 2014.
6. **The Facilitator** to ask absent members whether they would like to be listed as a signatory on any of the letters.
7. **All Members:** To send any final comments, recommendations or suggested improvements on the revised PSW letter, San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD) Letter, and Kings River Conservation District (KRCD) and Kings River Water Association (KRWA) letters by close of business on November 27, 2013.
8. **The Facilitator:** To set up an Adaptive Management Framework call with **Mr. Mount, Mr. Thomas, Ms. Roberts and Mr. Tuitele-Lewis** in December or January 2014.
9. **All Members:** To send any final comments on the Prescribed Fire Prioritization document to the Facilitator by the close of business of November 27, 2013.
10. **Prescribed Fire Work Group:** To reconvene by phone in December and in-person in January to begin preparing a proposal for prescribed fire.
11. **The Facilitator:** To draft a letter to Sierra NF Supervisor regarding the importance of prescribed fire for full Collaborative review on January 16, 2014, with reference to Dinkey Strategy.
12. **The Facilitator:** To invite Dr. Carolyn Hunsaker to present at a future meeting on mechanical treatments, fire, and the KREW Project.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Mr. Ray Porter, District Ranger, represented the Forest Service and welcomed members to the full Collaborative meeting. Dorian Fougères, Center for Collaborative Policy (CCP) facilitator, reviewed the agenda items, meeting ground rules, and conducted member introductions. There were no public comments.

2. Interested Party Comment Period

There were no public comments at this time.

3. Debrief of Socioeconomic Monitoring Public Meetings

Mr. Van Velsor began by handing out two documents that included the purpose of the project and the indicators that would be considered in measuring social and economic conditions of the DFLR area. He then began debriefing the Collaborative on the progress of the public meetings that had been held prior to the full Collaborative meeting.

- Mr. Van Velsor continued his review by describing the initial goal of the Sierra Institute. The objective was to, “identify and measure indicators to help advance understanding of social and economic conditions and trends in the Dinkey Creek Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) area.” He then described the two primary types of indicators that had been identified and were up for review at the public meetings. The first type of indicators focused on the community capacity, which, “Indicates the ability and willingness of community members to address internal and external stressors of concern.” An additional set of indicators that were up for public review included issues such as rural and cultural character, demographics, income and poverty, economic vitality, and public health. Upon completion of his debriefing, the Full Collaborative was then opened up for any comments.

Discussion Followed:

- Measuring the economic impact of recreation should include the stable populations in a given area as well as the incoming populations. An improved method of quantifying recreational impact would be to consider sales tax revenue as an indicator.
- Public communication and education could be emphasized.
- Utilize the National Visitor survey method that the Forest Service conducts to gather information on the number of people participating in recreational activities and use this information to see which recreational attractions draw the most public interest and improve the overall public experience.
- The primary regions for measurement were within the boundaries of the Collaborative Forest Restoration Program (CFLR) and it was thought that increasing these boundaries to include the Fresno/Clovis area would help to quantify benefits.

- Mr. Van Velsor and other members responded to this notion by claiming that including the Fresno/Clovis areas would be too large of an area of focus on, and that it was important to distinguish any benefits to the areas more specifically.
- It may be beneficial to measure the socioeconomic benefits utilizing a parallel structure to that used in ecological monitoring.
- There was concern that using the frequency of air quality measures exceeding thresholds was not sufficient enough to determine public health.
- Several members suggested varying recommendations for possible indicators.
- In order to prioritize these recommendations, many members expressed their interest in holding an advisory meeting to further discuss any additions.

Action Item: All Members: To send any final comments, recommendations, or suggested indicators regarding the Socioeconomic Assessment Report to Stan Van Velsor by the close of business on November 27, 2013.

Action Item: Mr. Van Velsor: To initiate a follow-up Socioeconomic Advisory Group meeting with the Sierra Institute.

4. Landscape Planning Update: Cumulative Impacts

The Landscape Planning Work Group informed the full group of the possible cumulative impacts of forest management activities. This included a definition of what constitutes a cumulative impact and why they are an important factor to consider in the planning process of the DFLR. It was also stated that this process was necessary to consider at the beginning of the NEPA process as opposed to it being historically considered at the end. Doing so would provide a longer timeframe for preventative measures to be applied.

Discussion followed:

- Conducting these cumulative effects analyses would be beneficial to the DFLR. The system should be more broadly applied throughout the Sierra Nevada Range as well as extending it to other forest landscapes.
- Ms. Britting added that this data could be useful in monitoring the California Spotted Owl and the Pacific Fisher. She noted that applying these analyses early on in the process would assist in avoiding adverse impacts to these valuable species.
 - In regards to these species, she also suggested that this type of analysis be applied to historic reproductive data and population dynamics of owls and fisher to identify and understand the use and occupation of certain areas.
 - Another member noted that this information should be applied to analyzing the impacts to species movement, predation, and how the cumulative effects are influencing species at an ecosystem scale.

- Mr. Porter expressed the importance of keeping an open mind about what is currently known about these species and that further testing should be conducted to determine what the effects really are, and how these effects are impacting the species. He also stressed the importance of making the process more efficient and cost effective, it was important to recognize reasonable concerns and thresholds and utilize these thresholds to make analyses more efficient on a regional and national scale.

5. Multiparty Ecological Monitoring Plan

Mr. Van Velsor and Ms. Roberts Identified those members who had participated in completing the monitoring plan and thanked them for their contributions.

- The plan was reviewed by the full collaborative at the August 15th meeting. At the time there were four sections that were still under development by the Monitoring Work Group: Forest Structure, Yosemite Toad Occurrence and Abundance, Reducing the Risk of Stand-Replacing Wildfire, and Promoting Natural Fire Regimes. These sections were then presented to the collaborative for consideration.

Discussion Followed:

- Regarding the Forest Structure section, Mr. Van Velsor pointed out that there was a correction made to the number of trees per acre to 175
- There was a proposal to change the statement of, “Density of small trees should be variable and could range from 0-1,000 trees/acre in patchy areas <1 acre in size.”
- Regarding the proposal, the phrase “patch size” is ambiguous and can lead to confusion in determining the scale for monitoring, whether it be stand or landscape.
- It was proposed to amend the statement to say, “trees per acre in patchy areas, at the stand scale.”
- After further discussion, the facilitator suggested an amendment stating, “trees per acre in patchy areas, within a stand.”

Following discussion, the group agreed to adopt the second amendment and recommend the plan to the forest.

AGREEMENT: Members adopted the suggested amendment to Forest Structure reading, “trees per acre in patchy areas within a stand.”

AGREEMENT: With the preceding amendment, members recommended the Ecological Monitoring Plan to the Forest.

Members present: Mr. Ashley, Mr. Bagley, Ms. Britting, Mr. Conner, Mr. Kent Duysen, Mr. Larry Duysen, Mr. Fidler, Mr. Goode, Mr. Harger, Mr. Kaminski, Mr. Laclergue, Ms. Reynolds, Mr. Smith, Ms. Stacy, Mr. Stewart, Mr. Thomas, Mr. Van Velsor

6. General Updates

Mr. Porter reviewed the handout in place of Ms. Ballard.

Deputy District Ranger Consideration

- Mr. Porter explained that the Forest is still in search for a new Deputy District Ranger replacing Mr. Mosé Jones-Yellin. However, permission was finally granted to begin the recruiting process. Because it is unknown how long the hiring process will take, a fire ecologist may be temporarily brought into the position for the approximate duration of one hundred and twenty days.

Fire Recovery

- The USFS is still awaiting funding assistance to aid in the recovery of three high priority fires: the Aspen Fire, the Rim Fire and the American Fire.
- In regards to the work being done in the Aspen Fire region members appreciated the work that had been done thus far in terms of the attention to maintaining wildlife habitat in the burned landscape.
- The Dinkey Collaborative should apply this type of ecological impact analysis to present and future fire impacts.

Eastfork Stewardship

- Implementation is complete for the season in the Eastfork project. In addition, work has been completed in the Snow Corral meadow. Operations in the Ahart Meadow area and Bear Ridge area will begin next season.

Soaproot Stewardship

- The Soaproot project was awarded to Sierra Forest Products (SFP). Operations began in October upon the completion of the government shutdown.
- Commercial thinning continues in the Rush Creek area. The FS was only able to secure the funding for mandatory work items but is working to obtain funds necessary for performing the option work activities.

Bald Mountain

- NEPA is continuing for the Bald Mountain project. The district has sent out for public comment and will come to a decision based on the feedback in the near future.

The following projects are within the Dinkey Landscape boundary, but were not planned by the Dinkey Collaborative.

Kings River Experimental Watershed (KREW Timber Sale)

- Harvest has stopped for the season in the Kings River Experimental Watershed Timber Sale. Implementation for the three remaining units will begin next field

season. The KREW burns are still in progress, and roughly 760 out of 800 acres have been completed.

Dinkey North and Dinkey South Stewardship

- Pile burning continues in Dinkey South.
- The tractor pile contract is continuing in Dinkey North, these areas will be burned this fall.

7. Review of Public Education Materials

The facilitator explained that there was a Communication Work Group meeting on September 26th. The document handed out was a product of this meeting and would be reviewed by the Full Collaborative.

- There was a strong interest among the members in participating in public outreach, especially in the areas of fire and fire management and that having a power point presentation available for any and all groups would be beneficial.
- Ms. Justine Reynolds, Communication Work Group Co-Lead, presented a brochure that would be available for public information regarding the collaborative. On the back of the brochure, it would also provide recognition to the members and partners of the Collaborative. This section was then up for full review.

Discussion Followed:

- Several members suggested that all of the interested Collaborative partners be represented including individual landowners and tribes.
- There was also interest in the Facilitator notifying the group ahead of time, of the group photo to be taken at the next field meeting.

The facilitator then stated that there had been previous discussion on developing a budget for public outreach to support limited materials and travel.

Action Item: Communication Work Group: To reconvene by telephone in December to revise communication materials and develop a proposal for an outreach and education budget.

Action Item: Forest Staff: To brief the Collaborative on the current budget at an upcoming full Collaborative meeting.

A handout was distributed among members that listed communication commitments for 13 different methods of public outreach to be conducted in the present and near future. Several members agreed to be added to the list, these additions follow below:

Updated Communication Commitments:

- **Section 1:** The Communication Work Group
- **Section 3:** Mr. Ashley
- **Section 4:** Ms. Stacy
- **Section 5:** The Communication Work Group
- **Section 6:** Mr. Goode, Mr. Thomas, Mr. Conner and Mr. Ashley
- **Section 7:** Mr. Harger and Mr. Ashley
- **Section 8:** Mr. Van Velsor and Mr. Thomas
- **Section 9:** Ms. Reynolds
- **Section 10:** Ms. Reynolds, Ms. Dyer, Mr. Goode, Mr. Val Velsor and Mr. Thomas
- **Section 12:** Mr. Kent Duysen, Mr. Larry Duysen, Ms. Stacy and Mr. Harger
- **Section 13:** Mr. Harger, Ms. Reynolds, Ms. Stacy, and Mr. Mount

8. Support Letter to PSW and Representation Letters

A. Letter to PSW:

The collaborative reviewed the draft letter to the Pacific Southwest Research Station (PSW). It was a letter expressing support for PSWs engagement the Dinkey CFLRP.

Discussion Followed:

- **Mr. Malcolm North** and **Mr. Brandon Collins** to be added to the first paragraph of the letter.
- **Ms. Rebecca Green**, PSW, be added for appreciation of her presentation to the collaborative on marking guidelines, and **Ms. Cathy Brown** to be added for her help with the Yosemite Toad.

AGREEMENT: All Members were comfortable with being added as a member of the PSW letter.

Action Item: The Facilitator to ask absent members whether they would like to be listed as a signatory on any of the letters.

B. Letters to the KRCD and KRWA:

The original purposes of these letters were to request the participation and input of the KRCD and KRWA members. However it was suggested that the Dinkey Collaborative first brief the KRCD and KRWA board members with the details of the project, then request participation. It was also suggested to hold a water discussion in the coming months, and to invite Mr. Steve Koretoff, who works in agriculture downstream of the Forest.

Action Item: The Facilitator to set up a water session call with **Mr. Ashley, Ms. Stacy, Mr. Haze, and Mr. Harger** in January 2014.

C. Letter to the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD):

- The Collaborative should have a regular, ongoing dialogue with Fire Management SJVAPCD to enhance the working relationship between the collaborative and the SJVAPCD.
- Ms. Ballard and other members expressed their comfort with the language in the draft letter as it read.
- The addition of a “Cultural Burn” component to the second paragraph of the letter was suggested.
- There was an emphasis in participation in public outreach by providing input on the ecological benefits of prescribed fires.

Action Item: All Members: To send any final comments, recommendations or suggested improvements on the revised PSW letter, San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD) Letter, and Kings River Conservation District (KRCD) and Kings River Water Association (KRWA) letters by close of business on November 27, 2013.

9. Discussion of Adaptive Management Process

Action Item: In the absence of Mr. Mount, The Facilitator will arrange a meeting via telephone to refine the framework provided in the handout with the initial work group members: **Mr. Mount, Mr. Thomas, Ms. Roberts and Mr. Tuitele-Lewis.**

10. Prescribed Fire Goals and Prioritization Criteria

Ms. Ballard presented on the prescribed fire prioritization memorandum that she had prepared. She explained the basic purpose of the document was to identify the given criteria that the CLFR will base its recommendations on priority areas in need of prescribed fires. In addition, the document identifies the criteria that the Sierra National Forest must consider in designing its fire prioritization. She listed constraints such as air quality, available staff, available budget, ecological value, and seasonality as factors to be considered in the prioritization process.

Discussion Followed:

- Several members including Mr. Porter and Mr. Thomson expressed their gratitude towards Ms. Ballard for preparing the document.
- Members conveyed that they would like to get together to look into the 20,000-acre existing burn and asked how they could be of assistance to her in terms of possible funding.

- Budgetary issues from the government shut-down, caused the Forest to stop burning in certain areas.
- Prepare a document that would allow for burns to extend to more natural barriers (i.e. roads or streams) would be useful and more ecologically beneficial than mechanically building fire lines.
- Stop treating the prescribed fire as an afterthought in planning but more of a focus at the beginning of the planning process.
- A letter be drafted by the collaborative asking for support and assistance on a Forest-wide basis in favor of prescribed fire treatments.
- The facilitator suggested the Collaborative consider preparing a large scale prescribed fire plan.

Action Item: Prescribed Fire Work Group: To set up a conference call in December and in-person meeting in January to begin preparing a prescribed fire proposal. Mr. Fidler, Mr. Stan Harger, Mr. Thomas and his associate from the Sierra Forest Legacy, Mr. Ashley, volunteered to be members of this working group.

Action Item: The Facilitator: To draft a letter to Sierra NF Supervisor regarding the importance of prescribed fire for full Collaborative review on January 16, 2014, with reference to Dinkey Strategy.

Action Item: The Facilitator: To invite Dr. Carolyn Hunsaker to present at the January 16th meeting on mechanical treatments, fire, and the KREW Project.

11. Closing Remarks

- Given the small number of agenda items, the Collaborative agreed to cancel the December 19th meeting and postpone the scheduled items to the January 16th meeting
- Mr. Van Velsor stated that the Monitoring Coordinator Cost Share Agreement with The Wilderness Society had just been reauthorized.
- Mr. Ashley brought attention to the December 3rd Madera hearing on the Biomass Project proposed for North Fork.

12. Attendees:

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|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Emily Adams, CCP | 7. Steven Campbell, | 13. Larry Duysen |
| 2. Chip Ashley | 8. Dirk Charley, USFS | 14. Dan Fidler |
| 3. Rich Bagley | 9. John Cielnicki, | 15. Dorian Fougères, |
| 4. Carolyn Ballard, | USFS | CCP |
| 5. Mark Berge | 10. Narvell Conner | 16. Rebecca Garcia, |
| 6. Sue Britting | 11. Debra Drecksell | USFS |
| | 12. Kent Duysen | 17. Hon. Ron Goode |

18. Stan Harger
19. Andy Hosford,
USFS
20. Joe Kaminski
21. Ray Laclergue
22. Marc Meyer, USFS

23. Ray Porter, USFS
24. Justine Reynolds
25. Susan Roberts
26. Ramiro Rojas, USFS
27. Mark Smith
28. Erin Stacy

29. John Stewart
30. Craig Thomas
31. Stan Van Velsor
32. Stephanie Zimmt-
Mach